Army communicators: first ones in, last ones out
By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st Corps Support Command Public Affairs

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Iraq—Communications is the means by which a commander exercises his or her command and control of forces. Without communications, commanders are unable to effectively provide command and control for their forces. Even during primitive times there existed some form of communications, be it through sound, hand gestures and inanimate devices such as flags.

On today's battlefield, the 1st Corps Support Command provides it Soldiers with the best communication tools available to support their operations throughout the battlefield.

"A lot of hard work and dedication goes into running this shop. Because of the system that we have, we have to know how to work all of them," said Master Sgt. James C. Brown, automations system command and control chief, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Corps Support Command.

"We serve and support over 25,000 clients on LSA Anaconda, and that includes classified and unclassified internet service 24 hours a day, seven days a week," Brown said.

The G6 element, supervised by Maj. David Mizelle, chief communications officer, also provides technical support for server to units at Taji (Iraq) and Tallil (Iraq) and provides communications support to over 12 forward operating bases and locations throughout Iraq.

There is a laundry list of other services the element, comprised of about 25 Soldiers and civilian contractors, provides in order for ground commanders to operate throughout Iraq.

"We administrate the SharePoint portal server which is a collaborative software used by personnel on (LSA) Anaconda, for classified and unclassified systems," said William Moore, USFalcon civilian contractor web administrator.

The collaborative software allows him to help users manage their individual websites.

"So, basically if an individual posts a document on their website the software allows the documents and information to be available for others that require access to it," Moore said.

Moore and his team also manages and maintains on the hardware that runs the portal.

The service that the G6 element provides doesn't end there. With a team of about six other civilian contractors, they are able to provide a wide range of additional services.

"My team provides audio/ visual maintenance, operation and maintenance of the call manager that regulates the voice over internet protocol, and provide system administrators for the Balad domain and Centrix systems," said Christopher S. Anelundi, BAE civilian contractor project manager and video teleconferencing specialist.

His team is also responsible for scheduling and maintaining the VTC for all of LSA Anaconda.

Additionally, Anelundi has an Electrician who doubles as an air-condition mechanic to take care of minor electrical equipment and air-conditioning not supported by the Department of Public Works here.

The G6 element also provides Information Work Space, which is collaboration software that the commander can use to communicate with his subordinate commands for battle update briefings.

"With the use of IWS the commander can have positive command and control of subordinate units scattered throughout the theater," Brown said.

With all of the different means to communicate, personnel with automation specialties are a vital commodity to have on hand.

"My job is primarily working with the (Combat service support Automated Information Systems Interface)," said Spc. Andrew M. Lui, automations specialist.

The CAISI is a wireless automated networking tool that allows units not centrally located near an internet infrastructure to have unclassified internet access.

"Some of us [Soldiers] in the shop were fresh out of (advanced individual training). I was one of them," Lui said.

"When I arrived here, I had to receive a crash course on the CAISI from [our predecessors]. I definitely learned a lot," he said.

Lui also provide systems troubleshooting on automation systems, tactical and commercial telephone systems and audio/ visual systems.

Lui, along with Moore, were two of the members of the G6 element that arrived in country early to stand up the 1st COSCOM's communications infrastructure.

The G6 element also supervises the communication requirements, develop plans and policies that govern the use of cellular and satellite telephones, develop the distribution plan for all automation systems and manages the signal network, which involves assigning frequencies for subordinates units to communicate internally to their units within the 1st COSCOM.

There were a few challenges, especially for an element whose responsibility covers a myriad of communication requirements.

The G6 element's biggest obstacle was setting up the communications infrastructure and standing up the IWS server.

"For the amount of systems we have to operate and maintain, we are undermanned for that military occupational specialty. Of the 14 Soldiers assigned to this section, we have four of them working out of their MOS," Brown said.

"However, we were able to cross train those Soldiers, active the system within a couple of weeks and get these Soldiers to where they are today," he said.

All members of the element agree that they could not operate effectively and efficiently without each other.

"The civilian contractors have had many years of experience and never hesitate to show us how to operate and troubleshoot equipment and the easier way to do things," Lui said.

"I think that the work relationship we have is a good one and has developed us into one great team," Moore said.

"What I like about this job is that it is very challenging and keeps you on your toes. What we offer helps people do the job that they need to get done," Brown said.
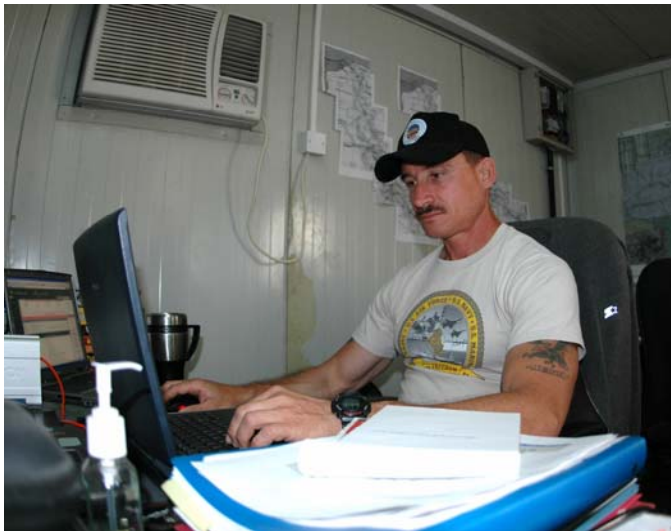
"The old signal saying is true, were the first ones in, and last ones out," Brown said.

When the G6 element is near the end of their rotation in Iraq, a selected few of the members will have to remain to remove communication equipment and train up their successors.

-30-

Editor's Note: Editors Note: Capt. Lumbaca is a member of the 1st Corps Support Command Public Affairs from Fort Bragg, N.C. and is deployed to Iraq in support of 1st COSCOM units at LSA Anaconda and various other installations in theatre.

Spc. Andrew M. Lui, automation specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Corps Support Command, troubleshoots the Combat service support Automated Information System Interface. The CAISI is a wireless automated networking tool that allows units not centrally located near an internet infrastructure to have unclassified internet access. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

William Moore, USFalcon civilian contractor and web administrator for the 1st Corps Support Command , works on updating the classified webpages on LSA Anaconda domain. Along with updating the classified site, Moore administrates the SharePoint portal server which is a collaborative software used by personnel on (LSA) Anaconda, for classified and unclassified systems. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca.

Members of the 1st Corps Support Command G6 are made up of both Soldiers and civilian contractors that work together to operate and maintain the 1st COSCOM communications infrastructure. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca.